

PINEWOOD NEWS

FOR 31 YEARS, WE'VE BEEN THE HEARTBEAT OF MUNDS PARK—YOUR STORIES, OUR HISTORY

VOL. 31 NO. 2 FEBRUARY 2, 2024

FREE!

COMMUNITY NEWS

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The Pinewood News is always interested in feedback and/or story tips from our community and welcome comments on any subject or article published.

The Pinewood News will attempt to publish letters received, except for those that are an invasion of privacy or libelous. Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Letters: PO Box 18977, Munds Park, AZ 86017
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PINEWOOD NEWS

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Genna & Sandee Caviness, Editors & Publishers
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Our team possesses in-depth knowledge of the local businesses, schools, and recreational areas, including hiking and riding trails, fishing spots, restaurants and lively community events. We understand that the sale of your property extends beyond the unique physical characteristics which is why we highlight the lifestyle that Munds Park has to offer. Our commitment to prompt and thoughtful communication ensures that we are ready to address any inquiries that potential buyers may have regarding Munds Park or Foxboro Ranch Estates. Our experience and dynamic approachable demeanor sets us apart from the rest. Stop by or give us a call to find out for yourself!



Becky McBride
Associate Broker/Owner

928.606.1385

Becky@flagstaffrealestate.com



Regina Bailey
Associate Broker

928.699.7069

Regina.Bailey@ProvidentAZ.com



Sonia Draper
REALTOR®

928.699.8621

Sonia@Draper-Realtor.com



Deavin Sedillo
REALTOR®

928.679.5505

sedillo.d.r@gmail.com



Crystal Welbaum
REALTOR®

928.606.4125

crystalwelbaum7@gmail.com



928-286-9171 • cbnorthland.com



COLDWELL BANKER NORTHLAND

As we ring in the New Year, Coldwell Banker Northland Brokerage in Munds Park is thrilled to welcome two new dynamic agents to their team, Sonia Draper and Crystal Welbaum. While they're the newest faces at the brokerage, Sonia and Crystal are no strangers to Munds Park or the intricacies of the real estate industry. Both Sonia and Crystal are looking forward to contributing more than just their real estate expertise to the Munds Park community. They are excited to bring various professionals to Munds Park to provide valuable insights on property insurance and real estate market trends. Moreover, they are keen on creating and participating in various community events, from festive celebrations like Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, and the 4th of July to initiating a community donation station and organizing a toy drive to support those in need in Munds Park. Coldwell Banker Northland Brokerage invites the Munds Park community to join in welcoming Sonia and Crystal. The office doors are always open so stop by and say hi. As the new season unfolds, Sonia Draper and Crystal Welbaum are ready to serve the community, not just as Realtors, but as active contributors to the vibrant life of Munds Park. Join us in celebrating this new chapter at Coldwell Banker Northland and the exciting journey ahead with our new agents!



Sonia Draper
REALTOR®

928.699.8621
Sonia@Draper-Realtor.com

SONIA DRAPER

Sonia Draper, a seasoned Realtor, joins the team with an extensive understanding of the local market and a reputation for excellent client relations. She stands out for her dedication to trust and open communication, building durable, meaningful connections with her clients. More than just facilitating transactions, Sonia focuses on creating personal connections and assisting clients through their individual home-finding journeys. Her passion for the community of Munds Park is evident. She's a familiar face in Foxboro Ranch Estates and loves a strong cup of delicious coffee from Kota's Coffee House. When she's not immersed in her professional role, Sonia loves to travel to warm beach destinations, kayak and enjoy the outdoors with her family. These activities keep her connected to what truly matters, enhancing her ability to serve her clients better. Sonia is more than just a Realtor; she's a pillar of the Northern Arizona community, dedicated to turning real estate dreams into reality and making a lasting impact in Munds Park. With her expertise, compassion, and commitment, she's the ideal partner for your real estate journey.



Crystal Welbaum
REALTOR®

928.606.4125
crystalwelbaum7@gmail.com

CRYSTAL WELBAUM

Welcome Crystal Welbaum, your expert Realtor in Munds Park, Northern Arizona. With an international flair and a vibrant background, Crystal offers a unique approach to real estate. Her journey includes crafting cocktails in Germany, perfecting fades in the barber's chair and owning an eyelash studio, sharpening her people skills and meticulous attention to detail. With five years in the field, Crystal excels in social media marketing, showcasing properties with eye-catching visuals and engaging content. She's responsive, detail-focused, and dedicated to guiding clients at every step of their real estate journey. Beyond her professional life, Crystal's world includes her beloved cocker spaniels, Coco and Oliver. When not opening doors to dream homes, she's exploring new places, hiking, gardening, and caring for her chickens. If you're seeking a perfect cabin or dream home in Munds Park, Crystal Welbaum is your go-to Realtor. She's committed to making real estate dreams a reality, unlocking a future filled with possibilities. Trust Crystal to guide you through the enchanting Northern Arizona real estate landscape.

Becky McBride
Associate Broker/Owner
928.606.1385
Becky@flagstaffrealestate.com

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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AA MEETINGS - FEEL BETTER!

Hosted at Munds Park Community Church
Every Monday, 6 pm • 17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

MUNDS PARK COMMUNITY CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday, 10:45 am • 17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

PINEWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY MEETING

The Community is Welcome!
Tuesday, February 6
6:30 pm • 475 E Pinewood Blvd

PINEWOOD FIRE DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Public Welcome
Tuesday, February 20
3 pm • 475 E Pinewood Blvd

PINEWOOD SANITARY DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Public Welcome
Thursday, February 8
3 pm • 18075 Fairway Dr

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17670 S Munds Ranch Rd

THINGS TO DO!

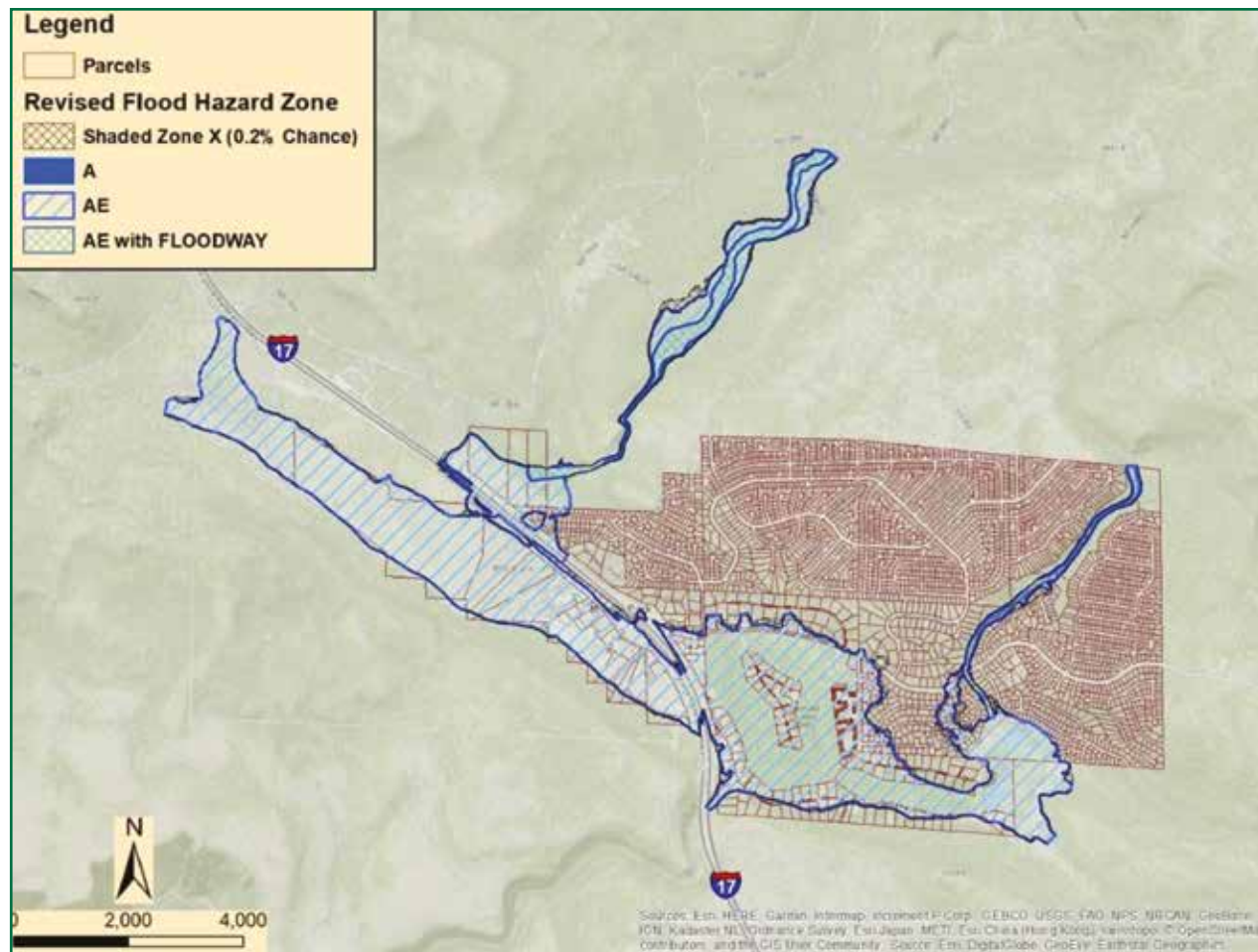
For events in Munds Park and surrounding areas
visit the Pinewood News 'Things to Do Page' at

ThePinewoodNews.com



*"It will be population season again
before we know it."*

PUBLIC APPEAL PERIOD BEGINS FOR MUNDS PARK PRELIMINARY FLOOD MAPS



*John Carr, Engineering Supervisor
Coconino County Community Development*

Proposed Flood Map for Munds Park

On January 23, 2024, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is expected to publish a second notice announcing the start of the 90-day public appeal period for the Munds Park preliminary flood maps. The flood maps, known as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), show the extent to which areas recently re-mapped in the Munds Park area are at risk of flooding. These flood maps update 30-year-old studies and help determine flood insurance and building requirements.

Citizens can view the preliminary maps at www.coconino.az.gov/3141/Munds-Park. FEMA developed the preliminary flood maps in partnership with Coconino County. The process included an extensive, multi-year review of the changes brought about by environmental, land use, and other forces. It used the best available science, including state-of-the-art aerial mapping, flood risk modeling techniques, and a comprehensive pre-release technical review.

Coconino County presented a virtual open house (a recording is available at www.coconino.az.gov/3143/Munds-Park-Flood-Risk-Open-Houses) on September 13, 2023 to allow the public to review and discuss the preliminary flood maps. The County hosted an in-person flood risk open house on September 18, 2023.

The updated FIRMs are still preliminary and have not been officially adopted and are not yet effective. This 90-day public appeal period allows property owners to formally submit appeals - which require analysis or scientific evidence showing the information on the preliminary map is scientifically or technically incorrect - and comments. More details about the appeals process can be found at www.coconino.az.gov/3147/If-You-Disagree-with-the-Preliminary-Flo. Once all appeals and comments are received and addressed, the county expects maps will become effective by early 2025. The new flood insurance and building requirements will take effect at that time.

More information about the mapping project is available at the website: www.coconino.az.gov/3141/Munds-Park. Individuals with general questions about the local map update efforts can also call the Flood Control District at 928-679-8881 during business hours or email FEMAFloodMap@coconino.az.gov. For information about flood insurance, contact your local insurance agent or visit www.FloodSmart.gov

Thinking of updating your homeowners coverage? Reach out to April Plonski at Lucky Penny Insurance, your local authority. See advertisement on page 9.



\$533,000

17280 Trailwinds Place

This charming 3-bed, 2-bath cabin, with an oversized 1+ car garage, offers a serene retreat with stunning patio views. Situated just 4 cabins away from the forest edge and inviting trails, it's an outdoor enthusiast's dream. Nestled in a tranquil neighborhood, the cabin features secluded covered patios on both floors, creating the ideal spot to soak in the natural beauty. Open, light and bright floor-plan features a vaulted ceiling surrounded by a wall of windows. Recent updates include new flooring, fresh interior paint, and a propane stove complemented by second-floor air conditioning. All appliances are included, making this cabin move-in ready. This cabin has been well cared for and lovingly maintained. Experience the perfect blend of outdoor adventure and cozy living in this delightful woodland hideaway.



Nancy Shelton
Associate Broker

928-856-0152

NancySheltonRealtor@gmail.com



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MOUNTAIN DESERT



LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT: NO EXPANSION FOR JANIS TRAIL GATE

A neighbor from the forest edge gave us a ring. He's selling his cabin, and guess what's throwing a wrench in the works? There is a story on the Rider Planet USA website about the Janis Trail cattle gate on Janis Place being super-sized for larger UTVs.

Understandably, such changes could significantly impact home values and disrupt the tranquility of the area. To clarify the situation, we contacted the Coconino Forest Service. In our conversation with Patrick McGervey from the Flagstaff Recreation Department, he assured us that there were no intentions to enlarge the cattle gate. He further explained that the Janis Trail is too narrow in many sections. If they were to widen the gate for larger UTVs, it would require the forest service to broaden not just the cattle gate but also the trail.

That's great news for our neighbor selling his home, the buyer, and the neighborhood!

We notified Rider Planet USA about this update, and they have corrected the information on their site.

A note to our readers: Your engagement is invaluable. Whether it's seeking assistance in investigating stories or simply keeping us informed about local happenings, your input is crucial for us to serve our community effectively. We deeply appreciate your continued feedback and information sharing.

OPERATIONS BEGIN AT PINYON PLAIN URANIUM MINE AT THE GRAND CANYON DESPITE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Mining operations have commenced at the Pinyon Plain uranium mine, located south of Grand Canyon National Park, as announced by Energy Fuels Inc., a Canadian company. The Pinyon Plain Mine, previously known as the Canyon Mine, is positioned above the Redwall-Muav aquifer, which supplies water to the Grand Canyon and is the sole drinking water source for the Havasupai Tribe.

The mine has faced opposition from local tribes, especially the Havasupai, and conservation groups due to concerns over potential groundwater contamination. Despite these fears, Curtis Moore, Vice President of Marketing and Development at Energy Fuels, insists the mine operates under the highest standards and is heavily regulated to protect health and the environment.

The extent of uranium ore extraction at the mine remains unclear. Activist groups, including the Sierra Club, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Haul No, are monitoring the site. Leona Morgan, a Navajo activist with Haul No, notes increased operations but cannot confirm whether ore stockpiling has begun.

The recent increase in uranium prices has influenced the mine's operations. Prices have reached a 16-year high, largely due to geopolitical factors.

The mine's operation continues despite President Joe Biden's declaration of the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, which prohibited new uranium mining on nearly a million acres around the Grand Canyon. The Pinyon Plain Mine, however, was exempt due to existing valid mineral rights under the General Mining Act of 1872. The mine's rights were contested in court by environmental and tribal groups, but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Energy Fuels. Moore expects the transportation of uranium ore from the mine to the White Mesa Mill in Utah to start sometime this year.

SUPERVISOR MATT RYAN RETIRES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPOINTS ADAM HESS TO REPRESENT DISTRICT 3

Adam Hess, a retired U.S. Army veteran with 27 years of service, has been appointed by the Coconino County Board of Supervisors to represent District 3. This decision was made at the Board's first meeting of 2024, following Supervisor Matt Ryan's retirement announcement in October 2023. Hess, a long-time Coconino County resident, was selected after a thorough recruitment process.

Hess will serve the remainder of Ryan's term, which ends on December 31, 2024. With all Supervisor positions up for re-election this year, Hess plans to run for a full 4-year term.

Supervisor Hess's office is located at the Coconino County Administrative Center, 219 E. Cherry Ave, Flagstaff. Residents can contact him by emailing ahess@coconino.az.gov or calling (928) 679-7163.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES: HUMOR BAN HITS AMERICA'S HIGHWAYS

Get ready for a story that's so absurd, it's almost comical. The U.S. Federal Highway Administration, in a stunning display of bureaucratic overreach, has decided that the biggest threat to American safety isn't, say, crumbling infrastructure or our open borders. Nope. It's those witty, chuckle-inducing messages on highway signs. That's right, folks. Humor is now officially a hazard.

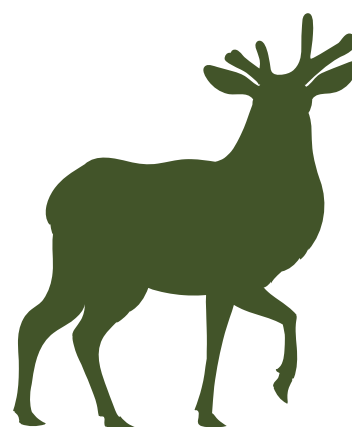
Those quirky, LOL-worthy messages you see while cruising down the freeway? Yeah, they're about to go extinct. The government just dropped a mammoth 1,100 pages of joy-sucking regulations (because why be brief when you can be excessive?) that's basically the buzzkill of the century.

Starting in 2026, prepare for a sterilized, humorless highway experience.

Gone will be the days of chuckling at clever quips like Massachusetts' "Use Yah Blinkah" or Ohio's sly "Visiting in-laws? Slow down, get there late." These signs weren't just traffic instructions; they were tiny, unexpected bursts of joy in our mundane commutes. But no, the government insists that we must be shielded from such dangerous distractions.

And in Arizona, our rebel state that dared to inject a bit of creativity into the daily grind. Our Department of Transportation's contest for the wittiest highway sign was a beacon of light-hearted brilliance. Thousands engaged, dreaming up gems like "Seatbelts always pass a vibe check." But the feds have spoken, and the party is over.

In a world bursting with real problems, it's both fascinating and mildly infuriating that our dear government finds the time to regulate humor on highways. Because, clearly, that's what was holding back national progress. Can someone please hand these folks a sense of humor? Or at least a more pressing to-do list?



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MOUNTAIN LIVING

IS HIGH COUNTRY LIVING FOR YOU? KNOW BEFORE YOU MOVE.

By Sandee Caviness

Genna and I have sold our cabin in Munds Park, and our destination, we hope, is Rimrock, our neighbor down the hill. It offers the best of both worlds: the mild heat I am looking for and the slight chill Genna prefers. Leaving the Park was a difficult decision, but we're not moving far – Rimrock is about the same distance as Flagstaff. We still own the hometown paper, and we will continue to maintain our connection to the community and the great friends we've made. We're simply moving down the hill.

When we first moved to the Park, we didn't consider all that comes with mountain living. As Flatlanders from the Valley, we were novices and literally knew nothing about mountain life and had to learn on the fly.

Although Rimrock doesn't experience the same snowfall as Munds Park and differs in other ways, it still embodies remote mountain living, which requires careful consideration before making a move.

Living in the mountains has its perks, as any local Mundsie will tell you. However, it's not just about animal sightings and scenic views. If you're planning to move to a higher altitude, be sure you're aware of all the pros and cons. I wish Genna had done more research before our move to the Park. We would still have moved here, but we would have been better prepared.

Here are some factors to consider before moving to mountain country:

Pro: It's a natural paradise.

From forested slopes to beautiful meadows, if you're living in the mountains, you're living in a place of idyllic beauty. Animals roam freely on mountains, thriving among the sparse population and minimal housing and business sectors. This harmonious blend of nature and wildlife adds to the charm and allure of mountain life. However, part of embracing this stunning environment involves understanding and respecting the wildlife. It's both fascinating and essential to learn how to keep wildlife wild, ensure the safety of yourself and your loved ones, and manage your surroundings responsibly. Something as seemingly benign as overstuffing garbage cans can have consequences. Engaging with these aspects isn't just a necessity; it's a unique and enriching part of mountain living.

Finally, get far enough away from a city and you're likely to come upon the most magnificent night sky you'll ever see—Especially in Northern Arizona where you can enjoy a preserved Dark Sky region, offering magnificent night skies.

More information on how to live with wildlife and protecting our Dark Sky status in the Park can be found under 'stories' at www.ThePinewoodNews.com.

Con: It's not easy to expand or maintain property

Remodeling, repairing, or expanding cabins in the mountains presents unique and challenging tasks. Grading land for expansion, for instance, requires extensive labor and incurs significant costs. This process demands considerable effort and specialized equipment, from clearing trees to navigating rugged topography. Additionally, repairs and maintenance of mountain properties often face issues not found in other settings, such as managing harsh weather effects or accessing remote locations.

The availability of trade services for these specific mountain needs is limited. Fewer businesses are equipped to handle the complexities of mountain construction and repairs, leading to scarce resources, higher expenses, and longer wait times. Effective planning and budgeting are essential, as is hiring professionals adept in mountain-specific issues.

For assistance in finding reputable services, consult the Pinewood News advertisers first. Since 2022, we ensure all new advertisers have a 4.7+ Google rating to advertise with us, reflecting our commitment to our readers and our community.

Pro: Tons of privacy

Privacy is abundant in mountain living, offering peace, quiet, and a connection to nature. You get your own little sanctuary, away from the hustle and noise of city life, allowing you to enjoy a more tranquil and solitary existence—This alone is worth the move!

Con: Difficult Driving Conditions

If you decide to make a home up north, you'll have to contend with steep roads and black ice during the snow season. You must have a car or truck that can handle the slopes and ice. Ditch the sports car and start looking at all-wheel drive SUVs and 4 wheel drives instead—especially if you enjoy staying on the roads!

Pro: Unbeatable views

Pretty obvious, right? The higher you go, the better the views. Sure, your bread might not rise properly initially, and you'll need time to catch your breath in the thin air, but those views? Totally worth it. Living up in the mountains means waking up to scenery that's always awesome, never boring. It's those amazing vistas that really make mountain life something special.

Con: Distance from amenities

There's no such thing as a quick trip to the store when you're living that mountain life. You won't see a lot of commercial development (nor do residents want it). No, if you've run out of groceries, you'll have to plan for

Continued on page 27



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HOMEMADE & WONDERFUL

A PASTA LOVER'S PARADISE!

By Sara Bowyer

I'm a pasta girl at heart. It's my 2nd favorite food behind tacos. I think that somewhere in my ancestral past there must be an Italian! However, growing up my mom did not serve pasta. My dad didn't like it. The only pasta we ever ate was in goulash and that was only when my dad wasn't going to be home. I have never been able to wrap my mind around that fact. What is not to like about pasta?! Pasta is one of the most versatile pantry items. It can be light served in a salad or it can be totally decadent served in a rich creamy sauce. Pasta can be an easy quick dinner or a more complicated 5-star dish. It pairs well with most anything, vegetable or meat. It can be a side dish or the main part of the dish. There are a myriad of ways to serve and eat pasta.

I have always wanted to learn how to make my own pasta. Fresh pasta is amazing and the flavor so different from the box of pasta you buy in the store. I even bought a pasta roller last year but have yet to try it out. It's a bit intimidating to me for some reason. So, the pasta roller sits on my shelf. I will get it out soon to give it a try, but it might be a while longer. You see, my husband bought me the most amazing gift for Christmas. He bought me a membership to the Pasta of the month club!!! It's from a New York pasta company and every 3 months I will receive 6 boxes of pastas. Each box will be a different type of pasta. Maybe different shapes, different types of flours, or even flavored. How fun is that?! Now I can try all these amazing types of pastas without making them from scratch! Depending on where you research, there are between 300-600 different pasta types. Yep, you read that right. And I will now get to try 24 of them by the end of the year!

So, in honor of this Christmas gift, I decided to give you some of my favorite pasta recipes. Since it is winter here, these recipes will be heavier and richer types. When summer comes, maybe I'll do a follow up article and give you some lighter recipes. In either case, I hope you will try them and find that pasta is not just for spaghetti and meat sauce. And maybe you'll get a little adventurous with it too! Enjoy!

TURMERIC REGINETTI PASTA WITH MOROCCAN MEATBALLS & TOMATO SAUCE

This recipe came from the pasta-of-the-month cookbook. I made this today and it was fantastic. I substituted ground chicken for lamb.

Ingredients: Spice Mix

- 1 Tbl ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground black pepper

Ingredients: Meatballs:

- 1 sm yellow onion
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 1 bunch flat leaf parsley, chopped
- 1 lb ground lamb, turkey or chicken
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 Tbl smoked paprika
- 1 1/2 tsp toasted spice mix
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- For the sauce:
- 2 Tbl olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, thinly sliced



- 4 garlic cloves, microplane or finely minced
- 1 1/2 tsp toasted spice mix
- 1 1/2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- 5 saffron threads (optional)
- 28 oz canned crushed tomatoes
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 cup pitted green olives
- 12 oz turmeric Reginetti pasta (I used Sfoglini brand)

Directions

1. First mix the spice mix and set aside. Place a box grater on a plate and grate the small onion for the meatballs, reserving all liquid. In a large bowl, combine the grated onion and its liquid with the herbs, then add the rest of the ingredients for the meatballs. Gently mix thoroughly by hand. Roll into small meatballs, no bigger than a tablespoon and place on a plate.
2. In a large saute pan, heat the 2 tbl of olive oil over medium high heat. Add in the meatballs, being careful not to crowd the pan, to sear. Brown the meatballs on one side, then turn and brown on the other side, about 3 to 5 minutes on each side. As they finish browning, transfer to a plate and set aside.
3. Once the meatballs are all seared, turn the heat down to medium low and let the pan cool down slightly. To make the sauce, add in the sliced onions and stir well to coast in the fat (may need to add a bit more oil) and scrape up the browned bits from the meatballs. Once the onions are soft, about 2-5 minutes, stir in the garlic. Let it become fragrant, about a minute, then stir in the remaining spice mix, chili powder, cumin and saffron. Bloom the spices for just a minute, then add in the crushed tomatoes and stir well to combine. Season with salt, then add the meatballs back into the pan along with the green olives and stir to cover with the sauce. Bring to a simmer, then cover with a lid and lower the heat slightly. Cook for about 15 min until the meatballs are cooked through. Stir occasionally.
4. While the sauce is cooking, bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta to al dente, according to the package. Reserve 2 tbl of pasta water before draining and add both the pasta and the reserved water to the sauce. Stir well, so the pasta is coated in sauce. Then serve with a sparkling of chopped parsley.

COUNTRY-STYLE RIGATONI

This is one of my kids favorite pasta dishes that I made while they were growing up.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup of olive oil
- 4 or 5 cloves of coarsely chopped garlic
- 1/2 of a thinly sliced white onion
- 1/2 to 3/4 lb. of Italian sausage with fennel, casings removed (I used Jimmy Dean sausage with sage)
- 8 large basil leaves, chopped (optional)
- One can of Cannellini Beans, drained and rinsed (I use navy beans)



- 2 cups of chicken stock
- 3tbl of butter
- 1 cup of grated romano cheese
- 3 slices of prosciutto rolled up and thinly sliced (optional)
- 12 ounces of dried rigatoni
- 10 broccoli spears, 3” long

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large saute pan, add the onions and garlic.
2. Add sausage, basil and parsley, cook till sausage is nice and brown. Raise heat, add stock and butter, bring to a boil, then simmer for about 5 minutes till sauce thickens a little. Stir in half of the grated cheese and cook for about 3 more minutes till sauce thickens. Add beans, sliced prosciutto, season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat.
3. Meanwhile, cook your pasta in salted boiling water for only 4 minutes. Add broccoli and cook another 3-4 more minutes. Pasta will be nicely al dente. It will cook more in the sauce so don't worry!
4. Drain pasta and broccoli, add to sauce, now add more cheese!
5. Salt and Pepper to taste.

PASTA CON BROCCOLI

This is a recipe I learned to make in Italy

Ingredients

- 1 large cup of broccoli per person
- 4 anchovy fillets or anchovy paste
- 2 cloves of garlic
- hot chili peppers or red pepper flakes
- 1 cup of parmesan cheese
- salt and extra virgin olive oil
- short pasta like penne, ziti, or fusilli



Directions

1. Paste with the blade of the knife the anchovies (in case you don't like anchovies, don't use them...) and melt them in 5 Tbl extra virgin olive oil in a frying pan (low heat). Add the pressed garlic and the chili.
2. In the boiling water for the pasta add salt and cook the broccoli florets for 3-4 min. Remove broccoli with a ladle and put into the frying pan

with a ladle of water from the pasta. Cook pasta in the water and finish to cream the broccoli. Drain the pasta, put it in the frying pan, add parmesan and saut .

3. "Finish to cream the broccoli" means that the broccoli needs to cook and "melt": we want a creamy sauce, so cook them down until soft, adding a little water from the pasta when needed (this pasta is not dry, but a little soupy)

BUTTERNUT SQUASH STUFFED SHELLS WITH SAGE BROWNED BUTTER

Ingredients

- 1 large butternut squash
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 (12-ounce) package jumbo pasta shells, about 20-24 shells total
- 2 cups of part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 1/2 cup packed fresh spinach, chop after measuring
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup butter
- 8-10 fresh sage leaves



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Peel the butternut squash and chop the flesh into cubes. Toss the cubed squash in 1-2 tablespoons olive oil and roast in the oven for 15-20 minutes until the squash is fork tender. Scrape the warm squash into a bowl and mash with a fork until smooth. Let it cool to warm room temperature before using in the recipe (this step can be done 2-3 days in advance and the cooked, mashed squash can be stored, covered, in the refrigerator). Reduce the oven temperature to 400 degrees F.

Continued on page 20



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TRAVEL

CHOCOLATE: WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?



Photo by Jessica Johnston



Decadent desserts at Hilton Sedona Bell Rock
Photo by Stacey Wittig



Photo by Caglar Araz

By “Unstoppable Stacey” Wittig

During Valentine’s week, we buy millions of pounds of chocolate candy in preparation for the romantic holiday. But what’s Valentine’s Day and love got to do with chocolate?

Chocolate has been associated with romance, passion and divine love for centuries, according to Jen Warr of Chocolatree Organic Eatery in Sedona. “Raw chocolate contains two main chemical compounds. The first, anandamide, is similar to THC [the chemical found in marijuana.] The chemical’s name is derived from the ancient Sanskrit word ananda, which means bliss. The second compound, theobromine, is similar to caffeine,” she explained.

“The two compounds together is the perfect potion for love: heart-opening, relaxing and allowing,” lauded the chocolatier. A third compound found in chocolate, phenethylamine, a psychoactive drug, causes pulse rates to quicken, comparable to the feeling of falling in love.

For those looking for a chocolate rush during Valentine’s week, here is a list of the best chocolaty destinations, complete with a chocolate-themed train ride, chocolate spa treatment and chocolate factory tour.

Sedona Chocolate Factory Tour

Travelers to Sedona can visit Chocolatree Organic Eatery and the adjacent chocolate factory to view over 100 different organic heirloom chocolates on display.

www.chocolatree.com

Hershey Chocolate Tours

Hershey, Pennsylvania, “The Sweetest Place on Earth” is a mecca for chocoholics. The rich scent of chocolate is in the air, and giant Hershey’s Kisses hang from light posts. Immerse yourself in chocolate at The Spa at The Hotel Hershey, which offers chocolate-infused body treatments and spa packages. Try the Cocoa Facial Experience, Cocoa Massage or Chocolate Fondue Wrap for a true Valentine’s treat worth the splurge.

www.chocolatespa.com

Chocolate Pairing for AZ Beer Week

The 14th annual Arizona Beer Week happens February 15-25, and to celebrate, Lumberyard Brewery and Beaver Street Brewery are collaborating on a Beer & Chocolate Pairing for the Lumberyard Ladies Beer Club. It all happens on Tuesday, February 20, at 5 pm when the doors open; the event starts at 6 pm at Brews & Cues. They’ll pair their beers with three different house-made chocolates. Get details at www.flagstaffarizona.org/events/festivals/arizona-beer-week.

Explore ‘Canada’s Chocolate Town’ with Museum Chocolate Tours

St. Stephen, New Brunswick, “Canada’s Chocolate Town,” is home to Canada’s oldest candy company. Visit the Chocolate Museum housed in a historic Ganong Bros. chocolate factory building. Take part in chocolate-making demonstrations, hands-on exhibits and chocolate factory tours while learning about Ganong Chocolates, founded in 1873. If you can’t make it for free samples on St. Valentine’s Day, plan to attend the town’s annual Chocolate Fest in August.

UK’s ‘Cadbury World’ Chocolate Tours

Bournville, Birmingham, UK, home of Cadbury World, a family-fun attraction run by the Cadbury chocolate company, makes a sweet destination for Valentine’s weekend. A live painted cherub will appear to spread the love and make hearts soar. Hearts and chocolate will melt at “The Place Where Chocolate Comes Alive.” If the cherub doesn’t do the trick, take your loved ones to the World’s Biggest Cadbury Shop for blissful, hand-crafted chocolates. Insider tip: Cadbury World is also located in Dunedin, New Zealand.

www.cadburyworld.co.uk

Perugia, Italy’s ‘Chocolate City’

In Perugia, Italian chocolatiers have created the legendary Bacio Perugina® for over a hundred years. The chocolate factory tour begins at the chocolate museum. Beyond all that, the Scuola del Cioccolato® (chocolate school) offers workshops to hone your chocolate-making techniques. Chocolate aficionados come from around the world for the chocolate factory tours and workshops, so reservations are necessary.

www.perugina.com

Verde Canyon Railroad: Chocolate Lover’s Special

Combining the thrill of a wild, scenic train ride through Arizona’s premier red rock canyon with sumptuous selections of decadent chocolates and romance-themed cocktails. Since Arizona became a state on February 14, 1912, Valentine’s Day is the perfect time to memorialize the romance of the rails. Verde Canyon Railroad’s annual “Chocolate Lovers’ Special” is available February 10, 11, and 14, 2024.

This article about destinations for chocolate lovers that get hearts racing for Valentine’s first appeared in T+E, the online travel magazine for Canada’s Cable Network.

“UNSTOPPABLE Stacey” Wittig travels the world and writes about food, wine and travel from her home in Munds Park. Enjoy this story? Then, get more travel inspiration at UnstoppableStaceyTravel.com.



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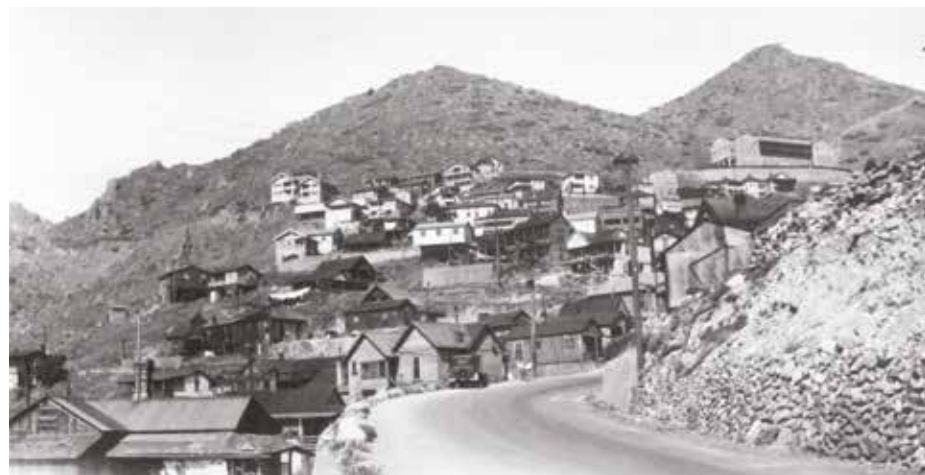
THE BLACK CANYON HIGHWAY



Construction of the McGuireville Bridge c. 1958



Original Black Canyon Highway as it passed through downtown Dewey



What was then known as Highway 79 as it passed through Jerome c. 1930

By William L. Cowan

Interstate 17 from Phoenix to Flagstaff is an efficient route - safe, fast, and scenic. You can now travel straight from the Sonoran desert of the Salt River Valley, speed through the chaparral vegetation between Bloody Basin and Horsethief Basin, fly past antelope grazing in the desert grassland above Cordes Junction, zip down into the Verde Valley, and whiz up to the clear blue sky and cool pines of Munds Park in a short two hours or less. It wasn't always so.

When the "Black Canyon Highway," as it was originally known was started in the early 1950s much of the area it traveled through was wild and remote. The roads that existed were mostly dirt and there was no direct route from Phoenix to Flagstaff. Why should there be?

As a child my family and I used to come from Phoenix up to the high country in an old 1937 Packard station wagon. It would take all day to get from Phoenix to our summer home at Mormon Lake. The route went through Black Canyon, Bumble Bee, Cordes, Mayer, Humboldt, Dewey, Prescott, Jerome, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, Sedona and Flagstaff. I can remember pestering my parents to stop so I could go swimming in Oak Creek or wherever there was water. On hot summer afternoons my dad would stop to let the radiator cool while the dog and I would splash in the lily pond at Rock Springs, wade in the Verde below Bridgeport or play in Oak Creek above Sedona.

As you speed up I-17 past New River, Table Mesa, over Deadman Wash and past Skunk Creek, you also pass Cordes, Orme, Dugus, Cherry, and McGuireville. These places were named for colorful, independent people like John Cordes, Fred Dugas, Mort Orme, Norval Cherry, and Eugene McGuire. They were the heads of pioneer families who eked out a living in the cattle business or operated small remote way stations and centers of commerce. When the road began these were just lone ranches and wide spots in the road. The country was all open range.

Black Canyon, Bumble Bee, and Cordes had been rest stops on the old Black Canyon Stage line where horses were changed on the dusty bone jarring trip from Prescott to Phoenix. Later these were quaint places for radiator water and Barg's root beer. Camp Verde, Cottonwood, Sedona, and Rimrock were very small agricultural communities. The valley was served by Highway

89-A up over Mingus Mountain through the once booming mining town of Jerome and up the switch backs above Oak Creek into Flagstaff. The valley was also served by Fossil Creek Road, once a trail used to carry the mail on horseback from the Verde to Payson.

So the next time your cruising out of the rat race of the valley and heading up the hill for Munds Park consider yourself lucky that the highway even comes this way. In the days before the right-of-way was finally decided, there was a major political effort by the Clarkdale and Williams Chambers of Commerce to run the highway through Cherry, Clarkdale, Perkinsville and Williams - logically the straightest route from Phoenix to the Grand Canyon. In that case Williams would have been the biggest town in Northern Arizona and had the Walmart. Flagstaff would have remained a small quaint logging town, and who knows, they might still be raising potatoes and beans down by the ninth hole here in Munds Park.

Enjoy Northern Arizona

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17050 S TEAL PLACE

Beautiful cul de sac, close to the National Forest. This 2004 Manufactured home offer two large bedrooms plus an office that opens off the living room. Newer dishwasher and carpeting. Roof is about 12 years old. Wrap around deck. Plenty of parking on a flat lot.

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\$485,000

17810 S WALAPAI ROAD, 62

Come take a look at this updated townhome. This townhome has the perfect location. Short stroll to the Country Club, Park and tennis courts. South facing covered deck, looking into the open court yard. Views to the golf course and great sunsets. Primary suite on the main level. Washer and Dryer located on the main level. Updated kitchen and baths, newer carpet. Upstairs to another large bedroom and extra large loft with walk in closet. Skylight above loft. Townhome is being SOLD with most furnishings.

CALL DEBI BRIGHT



\$649,000

170 W JANICE PLACE

Sitting on the National Forest and above the street, this cabin offers 360 views of the forest and of treetops. Enjoy the large private covered deck bordering the forest. Pine tongue and grove mud room, large open kitchen with granite countertops. In the spacious living room has a wood burning stove or forced air heating system. Ceiling fans in all rooms. Separate well lighted studio apartment below provides plenty of space for large families, or it could even be a rental unit.

Plenty of parking is available. Buyers to verify all info.

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A MAGICAL VALENTINE'S DAY IN WHISPERWOOD FOREST

By George Dee

In the heart of Whisperwood Forest, which surrounded Munds Park, a place alive with enchantment and secrets, lived a curious and clever raccoon named Rowan. This Valentine's Day, Rowan decided to create a special adventure for his friends, turning the day into a journey of mystery and discovery.

Rowan's friends were a diverse group who played together all the time. His best friends included Hazel, the quick-witted hare; Bramble, the thoughtful turtle; and Skye, the keen-eyed hawk. Each received a mysterious, glowing leaf as an invitation, guiding them to the heart of the forest where the first riddle awaited.

But little did Rowan know, the naughty gnomes Wayne and Eric, renowned throughout the forest for their trickster magic, had overheard his plans. With a twinkle in their eyes, they decided to add their own mischievous tricks to the quest.

The first clue Rowan left was a riddle whispered by the wind, which led his friends to a hidden grove. The riddle teased them with its lyrical mystery.

*I begin as a crawler, confined to the earth,
My world is simple, of limited girth.*

*In a slumber I hide, with a secret inside,
Transforming in silence, with time as my guide.*

*When I emerge, I'm a vision of grace,
Adorned with colors that brighten the space.
In gardens and meadows, with dance light and free,
I'm a symbol of change, what creature could I be?*



As his friends pondered, their eyes sparkled with curiosity. Then, with a smile, Hazel whispered, "A butterfly!" The friends jumped up and down with excitement!

As Hazel solved the riddle, a burst of colorful butterflies emerged from under fallen oak leaves, fluttering around the friends in a dazzling dance, one even landing on Skye's nose! Their laughter rang out, full of joy, echoing through the forest.

Next, the friends followed a trail of shimmering flowers, their soft glow leading them to a tumbling brook. Under the clear water, they found a clue, crafted with glistening stones that formed a playful riddle:

*"Silent wings in the moonlit night,
I survey the forest from a great height.
With eyes like lanterns, I watch and see,
The secrets of the woods whispered to me.
Who am I, wise and grave,
Guardian of the night, silent and brave?"*



The friends pondered and thought and thought some more, watching the water ripple over the stones. Then, with a spark, Bramble smiled and said, 'An owl!' Just as he solved the riddle, a splash of water leaped up, transforming into a giggling water fairy that danced around celebrating Bramble's clever answer.

The final clue, delivered by a wise old owl with eyes like polished moonstones, came in a most unexpected way. The owl softly hooted as the



Continued on page 18



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friends approached, and a flurry of leaves danced around them, forming words in the air. The riddle they spelled out was:

*“Among these friends, I weave my tale,
With a masked face and a ringed tail.
A seeker of mysteries, a lover of quests,
I planned this journey, creating these tests.
Who am I, clever and sly,
Architect of this adventure, under the sky?”*

As they watched the leaves whirl and twirl, forming the playful riddle. A smile spread across Skye’s beak as he realized the answer, ‘A raccoon!’ As the leaves gently fell to the ground, a path appeared, guiding the friends deeper into the heart of the forest. The trail twinkled, shimmering with bright colors, drawing them closer to the next surprise in Rowan’s magical Valentine’s quest.



Excited, Hazel, Bramble, and Skye followed the twinkling path through the forest. But as they neared what they thought was the end, a mischievous enchantment by Wayne and Eric came to life. Suddenly, the ground beneath them transformed into a giant,



bouncy mushroom! With each step, the friends bounced higher and higher, laughing with surprise and joy. As they playfully sprang up and down, surrounded by a whirlwind of butterflies, they giggled and giggled, having a blast. It was a playful prank brewed with the magic of the trickster gnomes’ sense of fun.

Hearing the echoes of the commotion, Rowan arrived and broke out in laughter at such a sight! Seeing his

friends bouncing around, he laughed and then, with a wave of his paw, whispered a calming spell. Gradually, the bouncy mushroom softened and settled, gently lowering his friends back to the steady ground.

As the echoes of their laughter melded with the gentle sounds of the forest, Rowan guided his friends to a hidden meadow in the heart of Whisperwood Forest. The evening was transformed into a magical place for a celebration of friendship!

The meadow was lit with a soft glow courtesy of fireflies that flitted about. In the center, a table made from intertwining branches stood,

laden with woodland treats: sweet berries, crunchy nuts, honeycomb, and heart-shaped cookies made from acorn flour.

Rowan, Hazel, Bramble, and Skye, drawn together by adventure and now united in celebration, gathered around the woodland table. They shared the feast with laughter and friendship. Each bite, each smile, and each shared story was a testament to the bonds they had forged.

In a surprising turn, Wayne and Eric, the playful gnomes known for their mischievous ways, peeked out from behind a tree. With a nod from Rowan, they joined the celebration, adding to the fun. The gnomes’ playful nature made the day’s adventure more thrilling.

Together, under the canopy of ancient trees and beneath the twinkling stars, they celebrated the true essence of Valentine’s Day in the



Whisperwood Forest – a day to cherish the invaluable gift of friendship. They shared stories, played games, and reveled in the magic of their bond, a bond that was not just for a day, but for all seasons.

As the night deepened, they made a pact to come together like this each year to honor the enduring magic of friendship – a tradition that would echo through the forest for years to come.

**Wishing you a happy Valentine’s Day
filled with fun & sweet surprises!**

HIDDEN PICTURES!

Solutions on page 26!



NYFFGLXME LKRAPSB
RXMURVKOE OFENMEHZ
UVYEFZDQGVCFRVBAT
FJDZTSBWS DRACCNPH
ETALOCOHCLGOTGQPZ
INSPVQSTILSCCSRIO
EWEYLNLD SJHUGRTNR
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EFEWYAKIRFTRYDECA
CRSXEFNSTMUAIRDWM
DDZOQERSD TYEOMLYS
TRAETHTEEWS IHJZEKE

VALENTINE WORD SEARCH

Search up, down, forward, backward, diagonal to find the hidden words.
Answers page 34.

- | | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|
| Candy | Sweet | Red |
| Cupid | Chocolate | Valentine |
| Gifts | Flowers | |
| Hug | Happiness | |
| Sparkle | Poem | |
| Cards | Sweetheart | |
| Dreamy | Crush | |
| Giggles | Friend | |
| Love | Heart | |





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EMBRACE THE PAST, VISUALIZE THE FUTURE: A UNIQUE GEM IN MUNDS PARK



“It’s not what you see, it’s what you don’t see!” Keith Cunningham’s “The Road Less Stupid” captures the spirit of Munds Park—A community defined by vision, transformation, and memories. Within this scenic setting is the unique property, Wagon Wheel, also known as 480 Cochise, ripe with potential.

Situated on a raised lot opposite the country club, Wagon Wheel provides panoramic views and an ideal spot for the annual 4th of July Parade. Some may see it as outdated, but its vintage appeal is a gateway to endless opportunities.

The property transports you to the Brady Bunch era, showcasing mid-century modern design, a spacious great room, and windows overlooking the club and golf course. Amidst areas with high new construction costs, Wagon Wheel shines with transformational promise.

Homes in Munds Park often cost \$600,000 to \$800,000 for similar sizes. Yet, Wagon Wheel’s

\$875,000 price tag comes with potential for enhancement. Envision adding a guest space, tailoring the interior without major structural shifts, and molding an environment tailored to your needs.

The seller’s openness to financing options adds appeal, letting you obtain this Munds Park gem while planning its renaissance.

Key Property Details: Price: \$875,000 / Size: Over 1600 sq ft / Bedrooms: 3 / Bathrooms: 2 / Floor Plan: Great room / Outdoor Feature: Large front deck

At Wagon Wheel’s entrance, picture the memories awaiting creation and the transformations possible within its walls. This isn’t merely a house; it’s a canvas for dreams and epitomizes Munds Park’s innovative essence.

Imagine owning a slice of Munds Park history. Wagon Wheel invites you to envision its potential. Seize this iconic property—Your Munds Park future beckons!

FEATURED PROPERTIES



\$849,900

725 Meadow

Stunning 2017 built property near 1900 sq ft. 3BR/2.5 baths. Great room concept with formal dining area. Split master floor plan with walk in closet, separate shower and tub. 9ft ceilings side entry garage. Near 17,000 sq ft cul de sac lot and beautiful screened in back patio and open deck to enjoy these cool summer days!



\$290,000

545 Cedarwood

Very cute single wide built in 1981 (financeable) great condition, fully furnished. Split floor plan with 2 bedrooms/2 baths large living space with 200 sq ft addition expanding the living space with fireplace. Fenced back yard with 10 x12 storage shed. Mature pines, circular drive and ready to move in.



\$300,000

17445 Sequoia

One of the last remaining Munds Canyon Lots. Great lot with great views comes with plans and permits. For 2000 sq ft home. No QR code on this one.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

MATTERS OF THE HEART

February marks American Heart Month: A prime time to focus on your heart health. You hold the key to defending your heart against disease. Simple steps like moving more and choosing heart-friendly foods can make a huge difference.

Remember, your heart isn't just any organ; it's your powerhouse! It deserves your utmost care and attention. Don't underestimate its importance, no matter your age. Heart disease is the top killer in the U.S., but even the young and fit can make positive changes for their heart's well-being.

Here's how you can keep your heart thriving:

Eat Smart for Your Heart

It's straightforward – fruits, veggies, whole grains, healthy proteins and fats. Cut down on sodium and swap out saturated fats for healthier options like olive oil. Remember, processed foods are a no-go. Now's the perfect time to embrace home cooking with whole foods!

Maintain a Healthy Weight

It's crucial for heart health. Being overweight comes with risks like heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. Check with your healthcare provider for your ideal weight and other key health metrics.

Get Moving

Long sitting periods are a no-no for heart health. Try to integrate activities that boost your heart rate – take stairs, walk your pet, or do chores. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise daily. Think brisk walking, swimming, cycling on level ground, playing doubles tennis, or dancing!

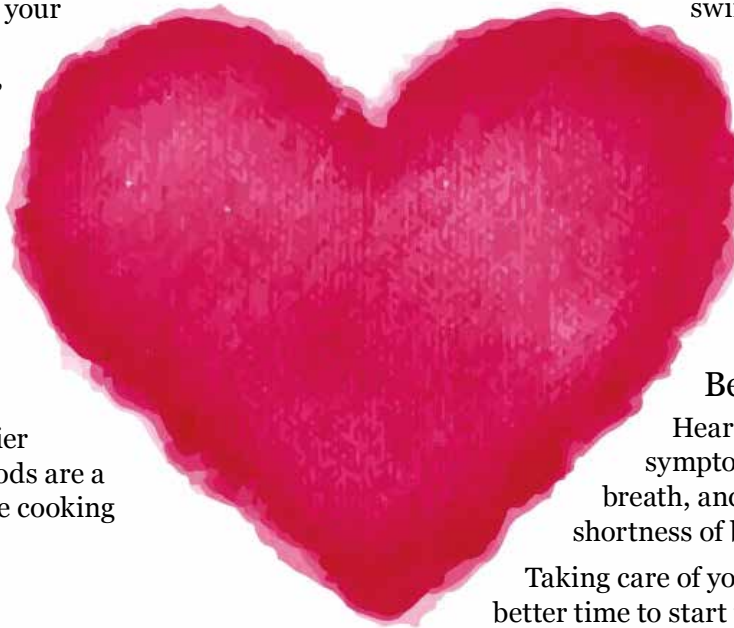
Live Smoke-Free

Quitting smoking or vaping will dramatically improve heart health. Even being around secondhand smoke increases heart disease risk. If you smoke, seek help – there are plenty of cessation aids and support groups. Don't delay, and get on it!

Be Alert for Heart Attack Signs

Heart attacks are not gender-specific. Be aware of symptoms like chest pain, upper body pain, shortness of breath, and nausea. Women, in particular, might experience shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Taking care of your heart is a lifelong journey, and there's no better time to start than now. Every small step counts towards a healthier heart and a better you. Let's make every beat count!



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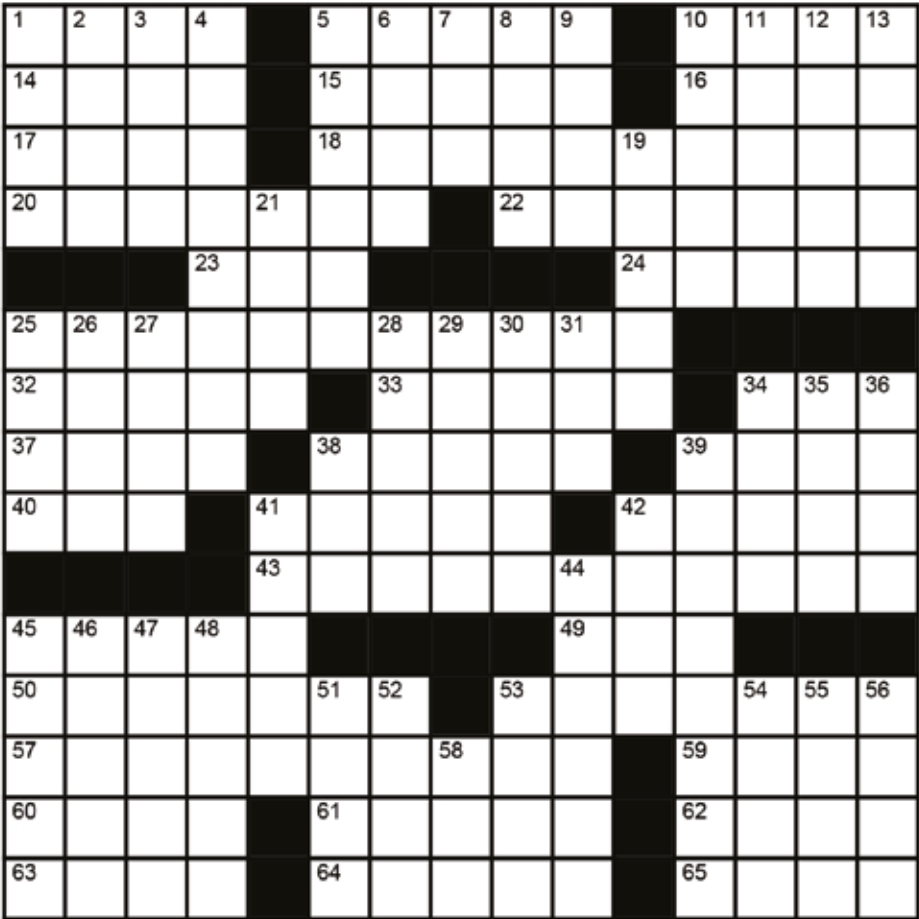
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Created by Paul Mason • Solution pg. 34



- Across**

1. Gives a hand

5. Calendar girl

10. Perry Como's "____ Loves Mambo"

14. ____ du jour

15. Be crazy about

16. Baseball stats

17. ____ good example

18. "Try a Little ____"

20. Excludes

22. Pass water

23. "MS. Found in a Bottle" writer

24. Hotel employee

25. Harmless slitherer

32. Construction girder

33. Propose

34. Grand ____, Nova Scotia

37. Excludes

38. Beau

39. Campus hangout

40. ____ el Amarna, Egypt

41. "Stars and Stripes Forever" composer

42. Sensational

43. With the capacity to develop

45. Wrist joints

49. Island strings

50. Sea nymph of Greek mythology

53. Fortunate in life

57. Justification for going to war (Latin)

59. Ballet attire

60. ____ Kringle

61. Freeze

62. Arab League member

63. ____ function

64. Peace birds

65. Gift on "The Bachelor"
- Down**

1. Abbey area

2. Holly

3. Go out with

4. Major irritant for American colonists

5. Sound of little feet

6. Bad day for Caesar

7. "Smoking or ____?"

8. Language of Pakistan

9. Jury member

10. Contour feather

11. "He's ____ nowhere man" (Beatles lyric)

12. Adhesive

13. Money in the bank, say

19. Metal fastener

21. Limerick, e.g.

25. Present

26. ____-bodied
27. "Get ____!"

28. Part of a teapot

29. Lasso loop

30. Geopolitical org. that includes Laos and Vietnam

31. White wine aperitif

34. "Knit one, ____ two"

35. Commuter line

36. Countercurrent

38. Go a-courting

39. (in ancient Rome) any of a number of officials who had charge of public revenue and expenditure.

41. Whirls

42. Go for

44. Dutch export

45. Fighting fowl

46. Mites

47. Pine exudation

48. VCR button

51. Footnote note

52. Art ____

53. Down in the dumps

54. Japanese wrestling

55. Flight data, briefly

56. Buggy terrain

58. "My Name Is Asher ____" (Chaim Potok novel)

HOMEMADE & WONDERFUL

Continued from page 11

2. Cook the jumbo pasta shells according to package directions and drain. In a medium bowl, combine the squash, ricotta cheese, Parmesan, garlic, spinach, egg, salt and pepper and fresh lemon zest. Stir well. Stuff the cooked pasta shells with the squash/ricotta mixture and place them in a lightly greased 9X13-inch baking dish (depending on how full you fill the shells, you may not use all of them). Bake the shells for 18-20 minutes, until they are hot all the way through.
3. While the shells are baking, prepare the brown butter sauce by melting the butter in a saucepan or skillet over medium-low heat until the butter is golden brown, about 10-12 minutes. Watch carefully as the butter can go from browned to burned in a short time. Add the sage leaves and cook until the leaves are slightly crisp (the butter should be hot and bubbly when adding the leaves so that the sage cooks quickly). Remove the pan from the heat and squeeze in the juice of 1 lemon.
4. Drizzle the sauce over the cooked shells and top with additional grated Parmesan, if desired. Serve the shells with 1-2 crisp sage leaves on top.



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GARDENS IN THE PARK

DIG UP THE FUN: GARDENING WITH YOUR KIDS

Nowadays, it seems like an uphill battle to pry our children away from the screens in their lives; televisions, computers, tablets, and phones increasingly dominate their free time. Creating opportunities for family time - preferably outdoors in the fresh air and sunshine - often feels like a challenge.

But the simple act of planning out your garden, planting it, and maintaining it offers a wealth of benefits for both children and adults. Teaching your children to garden is a gift that impacts their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. (And as a bonus, you can sneak in some math and science classes while they are having fun in the dirt.)

Gardening with your children fosters a love of nature. From planting seeds and seeing them sprout, to watching the birds, bees, butterflies and other pollinators visit, your garden becomes a living laboratory for your children to explore.

You'll be able to teach them about the environment, the responsible use of water, the life cycle of plants, and why some flowers are annuals that only last a season, while others bloom year after year. There are math concepts to learn as well - counting seeds, measuring the distance between plants so they aren't overcrowded, and calculating when you should plant based on how long a seed needs to germinate are all great STEM-related topics.

If you are looking for a good guide on gardening activities to do with your children, we highly recommend kidsgardening.org. It has dozens of resources that you can download for free for a wide range of ages.

When you garden with your kids, you instill in them a respect for the delicate balance of ecosystems that makes life on our planet sustainable, such as why pollinators are so important for growing much of the food we eat. Having that firsthand experience in the garden will help establish a sense of responsibility to the earth and encourage the next generation to be

good stewards of the environment. Or to put it another way, when you give them green thumbs you are also encouraging green values.

A garden also teaches valuable lessons in patience and responsibility. Children learn that nurturing life takes time and effort, not to mention that their actions (or lack thereof) will have consequences. Forget to water the tomato plants and they will shrivel up. Neglect to weed and your flowers might be overrun. But be a responsible gardener and you'll get to enjoy all the goodies, from beautiful flowers to fabulous food.

Gardening is also good for your entire family's health. Digging, weeding, watering, and planting all involve exercise and coordination. Plus the foods you grow by your own hand will be a nutritious and delicious alternative to typical snacks. Your child's mental health will also benefit; growing a veggie patch or flowers will give them a sense of accomplishment and time spent outside playing in the dirt is always a healthy way to relieve stress.

Gardening is a shared experience that gives families time to bond and create something beautiful together - and gives you cherished memories for years to come.



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SHAKEN & STIRRED IN PINEWOOD

LOVE POTION NO. 9

By Vinita Dee

On a street lined with whispers of love and echoes of magic, there's a story that dances through time, a melody of love's mysterious alchemy. It's a tune that lingers in our memories, a song of a potion crafted in the hidden corners of lore. Down at Madame Rue's, where dreams weave into reality, a legendary brew was born: a potion known only as Number Nine.

Madame Rue, with her gypsy charm and a smile that sparkled with a gold-capped jewel, dwelled in a quaint pad on Thirty-Fourth and Vine. Madame Rue's was the go-to for every Romeo and Juliet who couldn't get their act together since the days of '56. "Love's a battlefield, darling," she'd say, stirring a concoction that smelled like rebellion and tasted like a risk.

One sip? You'd forget if it was daylight or moonshine lighting up your misadventures. You'd be out there, kissing life in the fast lane, spinning on a dime, until, whoops – that one time you smooched a cop and your potion bottle shattered, spilling your heart out right there on the pavement.

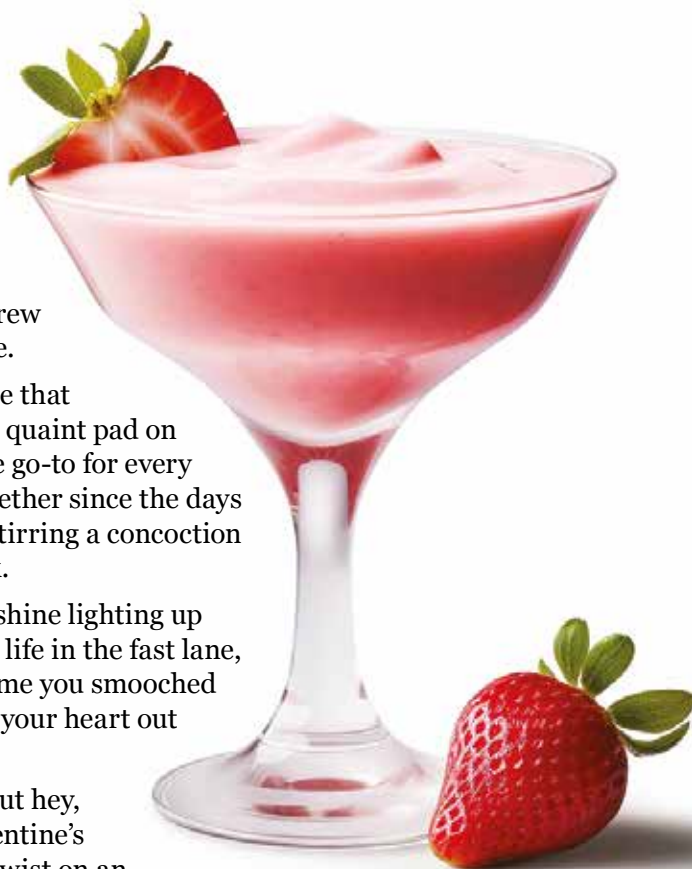
You're not in Madame Rue's mystical kitchen, but hey, who says we can't stir up a little trouble for Valentine's Day with Love Potion #9 Cocktail – a modern twist on an old classic, with enough sass to make Cupid blush.

Grab your blender, and let's cause a stir. Start with strawberries, as scandalously red as a lover's lips, and ice, cold as your ex's heart. Toss in a scoop of vanilla ice cream – because, sweetheart, you deserve some sweetness in your life. Now, the vodka: clear as your intentions or flavored like your wildest fantasies. Add a dash of white crème de cacao, because what's a love potion without a little mystery?

Blend it up, pour it out, and garnish with a strawberry, because let's face it, you're classy like that. It's pink, it's potent, and it's got a kick that says, "I'm here for a good time, not a long time." Share it with someone special, or heck, savor it solo because self-love is the real MVP.

So, here's to Love Potion Number Nine, the drink that's a wink to the past and a toast to the now. Whether you're kissing strangers or toasting to forever, remember: love's a cocktail – sometimes sweet, sometimes bitter, but always worth the hangover.

Cheers, darlings. Let the love (and liquor) flow.



INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup ice
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen strawberries
- 1 scoop vanilla ice cream
- 1 ounce vodka (unflavored, strawberry, or vanilla)
- 1/2 ounce white crème de cacao liqueur
- Strawberry, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. In a blender, add the ice, strawberries, vanilla ice cream, vodka, and crème de cacao.
3. Blend until smooth.
4. Pour into a chilled margarita glass.
5. Garnish with a strawberry. Serve and enjoy.

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WORD SEARCH

Created by Paul Mason • Solution pg. 34



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| Admirer | Chocolate | Flirt | Red |
| Adore | Crazy | Flowers | Rose |
| Affection | Crush | Gift | Smitten |
| Amorous | Darling | Heart | St. Valentine |
| Angel | Date | Honey | Suitor |
| Be mine | Dear | Hug | Sweets |
| Beau | Desire | Kiss | Tulips |
| Box of | Doves | Like | Valentine |
| chocolates | Embrace | Love | Woo |
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MOUNTAIN LIVING

Continued from page 9

a bit of a trip. And if you want to order a pizza for delivery? There are no delivery services here, and if it's winter, you'll have to hope our local eateries are open—better stock up on some good home cooking supplies.

Pro: Endless outdoor activities

It's true—most people don't move out to the mountains to sit around. That's the beauty of it. Up here, life's a daily adventure, full of hiking, mountain biking, climbing, skiing - you name it. It's this spirit of outdoor fun that's the heartbeat of mountain living. And if there's an activity you haven't tried yet, don't worry. There's likely a neighbor just around the bend, ready with a warm smile and an open invitation to join in. They'll show you the ropes, sharing not just skills but stories and laughter. In the mountains, we're all part of a community that thrives on adventure and friendship.

Con: Extreme weather

Weather has a way of being just a little bit more dramatic when you're up high. Winds whip harder, the cold is more biting, and conditions can present snow storms and a high risk of wildfire. To comfortably live in the mountains, you'll want to learn as much as you can about the weather you'll likely experience so you can plan appropriately and ensure you have everything you need. You especially have to learn about fire safety and living in the snow. If you are from the city, don't assume you know all there is about fire prevention. Genna and I have learned so much about how easily forest fires can happen, and trust me. You don't want to be that person who unintentionally starts a forest fire.

And the snow, when big storms come, you better be ready! Pipes freeze, electricity goes out, and you can't get to the store for the things you need. To get a real feel for mountain life, from weathering snowstorms to forest fire prevention, check out the stories page at www.ThePinewoodNews.com. These aren't just articles; they're survival guides; they're your handbook for thriving in the high-altitude drama of mountain living.

Pro: You'll probably always feel like you're on vacation

In the mountains, there's a magic that city streets and suburban lanes can't quite capture. It's in the crispness of the morning air, the vast silence of the night sky, and the daily surprises nature lays at your doorstep. Here, every day is filled with sights and sounds that relax the soul.

But this isn't just a place; it's a community. A community where neighbors aren't just faces, but friends who share in the awe and tackle challenges together. In the mountains, you're part of a community that supports and has a shared reverence for the world outside our windows.

Before taking the leap, do your homework. Understand that mountain living is as challenging as it is rewarding. But armed with knowledge and embraced by a community that looks out for each other, you'll find that facing these challenges becomes part of the adventure. It's not just about surviving; it's about thriving in an environment where you connect with nature and people in ways you've never imagined.



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WORD SCRAMBLE

Solution pg. 30

1. ETAWEHTSRE _____
2. TIANFCFOE _____
3. YERDAM _____
4. OASISNP _____
5. CEROAMN _____
6. DETINOSUC _____
7. EDRSENEA _____
8. ITEELNNVA _____
9. INFLRITOAT _____
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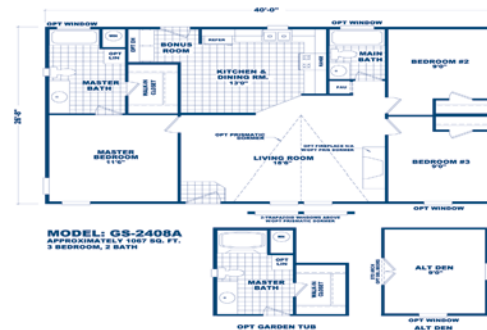
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BOOK REVIEW

BLACK SHEEP

By Sandy Wright

- Extinction
- By Douglas Preston
- April 2024, Forge Books

This page-turning thriller explores the possible and unintended dangers of the efforts to resurrect long-extinct animals.

Situated on a 100-acre valley high up in the Colorado Rockies, Erebus Resort created a new technology to de-extinct woolly mammoths, Irish elk, giant sloths, and other extinct creatures.

The resort grabbed the attention of a billionaire's son and his new wife who decided to spend their honeymoon at the resort. While out camping with their guide, the couple disappears, leaving behind a pool of blood. Colorado Bureau of Investigation Agent Frances Cash partners with the county sheriff James Colcord to help investigate the couple's disappearance.

More violent events occur. What is going on at Erebus Resort? Who killed the young couple?

As the killings escalate and the valley is evacuated, Cash and Colcord must confront an ancient, intelligent, and murderous presence at Erebus.

I like most of the books that Douglas Preston writes and this is no exception. He has been creating wild stories for decades, by taking a possible reality and developing a story around it.

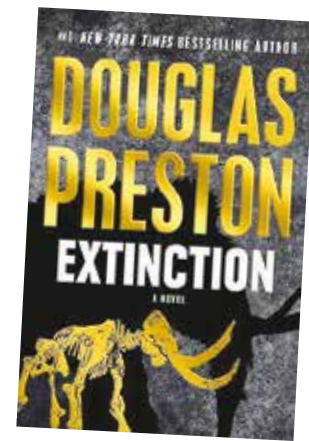
The plot is well-written, intense, and keeps your interest. The only problem is finding a place to put it down. The characters are mostly likeable. The pace is intense and escalates through the final pages.

While the idea of bringing back extinct species is not a new idea, it isn't totally science fiction any longer. The Afterward of the book states, as man pushes further and further into the arena of resurrection biology, who can say what our future might bring? Preston says this book was influenced by the real-life effort to resurrect the woolly mammoth, and he incorporated enough real science to give credibility and depth to his story.

But unlike Jurassic Park, the huge de-extincted creatures were not the dangerous predators. That twist was enough to keep the ending interesting for me.

This was an action packed ride of a book, and I'd recommend it to Preston fans or those who like realistic sci-fi thrillers.

Look for it on bookshelves or Amazon in April.







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SUDOKU

Created by Paul Mason • Solution pg. 34

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5								

WORD SCRABBLE

Solutions

- ETAWEHTSRE Sweetheart
- TIANFCFOE Affection
- YERDAM Dreamy
- OASISNP Passion
- CEROAMN Romance
- DETINOSUC Seduction
- EDRSENEA Serenade
- ITEELNNVA Valentine

- INFLRITOAT Flirtation
- NENODSFS Fondness
- RDNIEEN DTEA Dinner Date
- HPEANPISS Happiness
- IDKSNNES Kindness
- QBEUTUO Bouquet
- LUFRETT Flutter

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Human beings have been measuring and studying celestial bodies since the dawn of civilization. Astrology helps us understand our life paths and experiences by observing the movements of the planets. Although not fortune-telling, it can be a predictive tool and provide insight into personal issues, patterns, fears, and dreams. Through observing the cyclical movements of the planets, we can gain a better comprehension of the cycles and patterns in our lives.



ARIES, FIRE SIGN, MARCH 21 - APRIL 20

February is a transformative month for Aries as their life principles may undergo reconstruction, impacting relationships and fostering personal growth. This month's cosmic alignment signals a productive period in work and community involvement.

Identity and relationship challenges could arise, but Aries' resilience will prevail. This is a good time to enjoy bustling social activity, but it is important to remember self-care. The Full Moon on the 24th aids in breakthroughs in inner beliefs. During this time it is encouraged to embrace change, fostering significant growth and strengthened community connections throughout the month.



TAURUS, EARTH SIGN, APRIL 21 - MAY 20

February presents a great time to undergo a significant reassessment of life direction and contributions, especially in career life. Remember, challenges involving power struggles and ego require a balanced approach. Planetary placements signal new

beginnings and expansion. In terms of relationships, this month's full moon prompts Taurus to reassess connections. Work-wise, growth opportunities abound, with Venus and Uranus inspiring innovative ideas and the New Moon providing momentum for changes. Overall February brings an epiphany for collaborative ventures, making this a pivotal time, marked by career transformations and relationship shifts.



GEMINI, AIR SIGN, MAY 21 - JUNE 21

Gemini people may undergo a transformative period this month, with a focus on spiritual exploration and career changes. The new moon prompts questions about life, while reflections on love and universal truths arise. Career advancements may also occur

this month. Embracing the infinite possibilities and nurturing the soul is encouraged. Key celestial events this month may bring epiphanies, confidence, and unexpected love. The Full Moon triggers changes in home life, emphasizing stability within oneself. Overall, February is a month of profound growth and expanded perspectives for Gemini.



CANCER, WATER SIGN, JUNE 22 - JULY 22

This month, Cancer people may face a transformative period, encouraging self-reflection and acceptance. During this time, relationships may strengthen or face challenges. The New Moon prompts shifts in friendships and career success, urging one to embrace their power.

Later in the month, the new Moon encourages self-discovery and honest conversations. Mercury's placement this month brings hope and inspiration, encouraging one to reflect on their life purpose. It is advised to lead with the heart throughout this transformative month.



LEO, FIRE SIGN, JULY 23 - AUGUST 22

This month presents a chance of significant changes in relationships, especially partnerships, prompting self-reflection and personal growth. Communication is crucial as hidden truths emerge. Career opportunities arise, and financial matters, including

joint finances, take the spotlight with the Full Moon in Virgo. The New Moon on the 9th is an opportunity for love, empowerment, and courage. The celestial placements this month bring passion to Leo's love life. The end of the month presents energy that offers intuition and luck in receiving hidden information. Leo is encouraged to boldly embrace these changes throughout the month.



VIRGO, EARTH SIGN, AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22

This month Virgo is urged to reassess and seek appreciation for their efforts in work and relationships. This time may bring transformative changes in daily life, emphasizing health and revealing workplace truths. The New Moon on the 9th is encouraging you

to travel and learn this month, and to focus on personal growth. The Full Moon on the 24th encourages bold life changes and confidence to move forward with your goals. This time could also prompt conversations about partnerships and seeking guidance for relationships. February emphasizes well-being, work transformation, and nurturing relationships for Virgo.



LIBRA, AIR SIGN, SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22

February encourages self-reflection for everyone, emphasizing exploring internalized shame and fear that may limit joy and love. It's a gentle reminder to be kind while unpacking core wounds hindering the ability to have fun. The month has a rose-colored ambiance

with intriguing twists, bringing a new perspective on matters of the heart. You may even find a spark of inspiration for a new passion project, fueled by heightened creative energy this month. The Full Moon on the 24th can help you clear self-limiting beliefs. Clearing mental and physical clutter attracts positive energy, making February a month of self-discovery, healing, and positive transformations.



SCORPIO, WATER SIGN, OCT 23 - NOV 22

This month Scorpios are urged to reflect on memories and reimagine their current experiences, considering how their future selves might perceive the present. The cosmic focus centers on family and home, with potential deep-seated transformations and

revelations in family dynamics. Balancing personal and professional life this month is crucial, this time has an emphasis on resilience and adaptability. Pluto's influence this month promises to dissolve past grudges, fostering better security and stronger family relationships. Make way for new inspiration and a clear direction, urging Scorpios to approach life with joy and optimism throughout February.



SAGITTARIUS, FIRE SIGN, NOV 23 - DEC 21

Sagittarius people are being urged to find contentment by focusing on daily routines. Financial changes and unexpected revelations may occur, requiring vigilance and adaptability. The month brings continuous inspiration, with opportunities for

learning and connections. You may find February brings romance and new projects. This month it is advised to visualize their future home and explore innovative ways to capitalize on opportunities.



CAPRICORN, EARTH SIGN, DEC 22 - JAN 20

This month Capricorns are advised to focus on stability, particularly in financial matters. Celestial placements this month prompt a reassessment of money management and potential financial gains. Caution is advised against overspending, especially in

romantic endeavors. High personal magnetism and energy levels drive motivation in the coming weeks. Remember to navigate challenges with maturity, and seize opportunities for personal growth and romance. February brings hints at upcoming developments, encouraging Capricorns to celebrate and embrace new possibilities in their financial and personal journey.



AQUARIUS, AIR SIGN, JAN 21 - FEB 18

This month could bring intense changes, there is an emphasis on self-reflection. Focus on holistic wellness to navigate the pressure. It is advised to exercise financial caution, set boundaries in relationships, and maintain integrity. Celestial

placements this month energize passions; seek feedback before diving in. The energy during this time can attract new income or contracts related to passions for Aquarius people. Embrace these changes for long-term abundance, staying true to your values.



PISCES, WATER SIGN, FEB 19 - MARCH 20

Pisces, February urges introspection and spiritual growth. Embrace deep internal transformations, bring focus to creativity and personal revelations. Financial mindfulness is key for all this month. Celestial placements this month encourage you to let go of the past.

The New Moon on the 9th encourages authenticity, while the Full Moon on the 24th brings energy to your relationships. Use this time to strengthen your voice and bring a shift in reality. Embrace your intuition, assertiveness, and truth. The Universe is ready to listen to your journey of spiritual growth.

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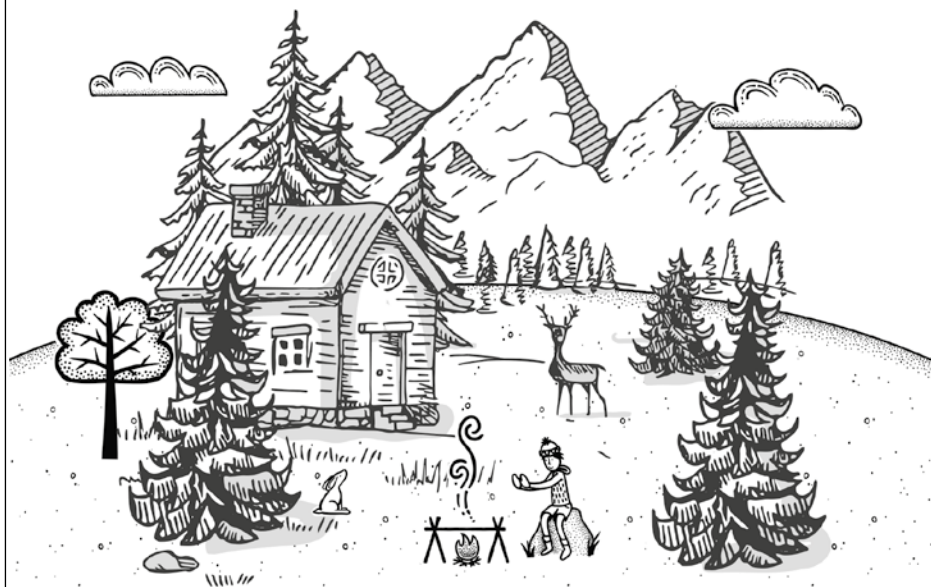
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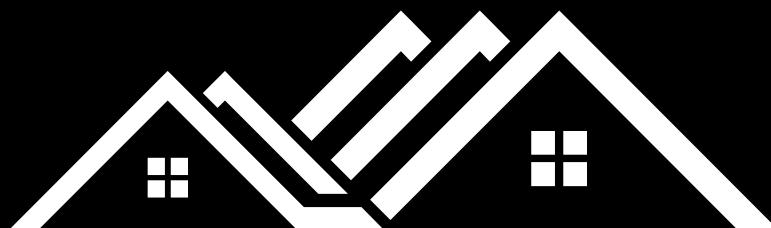
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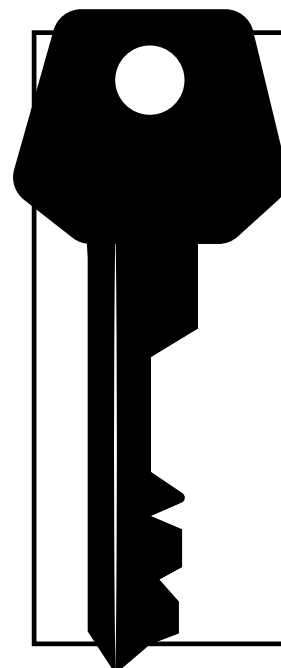
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JUST SAY THE WORD

By Pastor Steve Bowyer

Do you remember the “Can You Hear Me Now?” guy from the Verizon commercials? He would take a step and utter the now famous question and the assumed answer was “yes”. He would take another step, ask the question, smile, then move again. Don’t you wish he would have walked around Munds Park to discover how frustrated we have been with our cell coverage.

The commercials were a hit. They ran for over a year. There have even been knock-offs that were used long after. On top of that, the actor, Paul Marcarelli switched companies and recorded similar commercials for Sprint. That is, back when Sprint still had cell service before T-Mobile bought them.

The TV and print ads would assure us that the service worked everywhere. Except, there is always the miniature asterisk disclaimer paragraph at the bottom of the screen that lasts only seconds that no one could read that tells us some areas do not get the same coverage. Thank you very much. We could have told them that!

Does it drive you crazy when someone claims something, or promises something, and then they do not deliver? It saps whatever faith we may have in all of humanity; or at least the businesses that we pay to provide services for us.

Right up front in the Gospel that John wrote, he made a claim about Jesus. “Through him (Jesus) all things were made, without Him, nothing was made that has been made.” (John 1:3)

In Genesis 1, when God created everything, it says God spoke and it happened. What John is saying is that it was Jesus who did the speaking on His Father’s behalf.

That is a pretty wild claim. The guy they saw and walked around with was the guy who spoke and created everything long before. He brought everything to life. If we are going to place our faith in Him to save us, how can we be sure that the claim is correct?

The first miracle John recorded in the first part of ch.2 is when Jesus turned the water into wine. It is a pretty famous story. Even people who do not know much about the bible probably know about this miracle.

The story goes that Jesus and a group of friends and family were attending a wedding and a potentially embarrassing situation arose. They ran out of wine. Mary asked Jesus to do something about it.

“Nearby stood six stone water jars, ... each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ ... ‘Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.’” (John 2:6-8)

This was a private miracle. No one knew what had happened except the servants. When the master of the banquet tasted the wine, he was astonished that it appeared the host family saved the good stuff till then. Usually, the opposite was done. The good stuff was served first and after the guests’ taste buds dulled from the alcohol, they brought out the cheap stuff, or watered down the good stuff.

It is easy to skip over some of the significance of what Jesus was communicating in what He did here. He created wine that had already aged. Can Jesus create something with the appearance of age that might confuse our carbon dating system? Certainly. The earth may be younger than science seems to indicate.

Only the servants knew what happened. Why not the religious leadership, the host family, or even the civic leaders? Christianity is a movement among slaves, servants. We are bond-slaves of God. He specializes in giving lower-class people upper-class positions and opportunities. Among other reasons, we cannot claim that we did any of this on our own. We do not have the resources. We need Jesus.

And, finally, Jesus created the juice of a living vine from inanimate water. So, can Jesus create life with a word? Well, He did it at the wedding without a word. There is no mention of what He said other than to fill the water pots and give their contents to the master of the banquet.

Jesus proved the claim that He can bring something to life, he can create it new with the appearance of age, and servants were given special insight and position in His work. Jesus will never frustrate you by failing to live up to His claims. He will do exactly what He said He will do because He is exactly who He said He is. Our faith in Him for this will be rewarded. Stand strong and stay faithful.

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